N°23

Security of the Eſtabliſh'd Religion, the Wiſdom of the Nation.

A SERMON

PREACH'D at the

ASSIZES

Held at

HERTFORD,

Auguſt 7. 1704.

Before the Right Honourable

The Lord Chief Juſtice *HOLT*

AND

Mr. Juſtice *GOULD*.

By *JOHN SAVAGE* M. A. of *Emmanuel* College in *Cambridge*, and Rector of *Bygrave* in *Hertfordſhire*.

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G.R.
III.
BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

Edmund Feilde of *Stanſted-bury* Eſq;

High-Sheriff for the

County of HERTFORD.

SIR,

THE Importunity, which you have us'd with me to Publiſh this Diſcourſe, has prevented all Apologies for prefixing your Name to it. By being Preach'd at your Command, it was in ſome manner become your own Act; and by being Printed at your Requeſt, it claims a certain Right to your Patronage. I do, I confeſs, very unwillingly appear in Publick, becauſe, in a Nation where Factions run high, it is hard to declare Neceſſary Truths, without raiſing the Spleen of one, or other Party. However, as I am ſenſible, that it becomes none of our Order to deliver any thing but in Truth and Sincerity, nor to fear from the Preſs, what he did not fear in the Pulpit; I have at length overcome my Averſions to Printing this Sermon, and have choſe to ſhow my Compliance with your Requeſt, and my Gratitude to the Gentlemen of the Country who ſo kindly approv'd of it in the delivery, rather than to avoid the Cenſure of thoſe whoſe Notions are different from mine. Beſides, this Diſcourſe has already been ſo foully miſrepreſented by ſome whoſe Zeal for the Church, as I preſume, is more cold, and whoſe Principles in Government are conſequently leſs Loyal, that I have little farther to fear from that Quarter: Or if I have, let its future Fate be what it will, I am ſatisfied with the

Approbation which You and the reſt of the Gentlemen have given it; and in vertue of that, am arm'd againſt all Calumny and Detraction. Let the reſt of the World have what Thoughts they pleaſe of Halting or Trimming between Opinions, I ſhall always think my ſelf oblig'd, by my Vocation, to declare my Sentiments, as freely and boldly as thoſe, who think otherwiſe than I do, vent their Notions: and ſhall always wiſh, that thoſe of my Opinion, whoſe greater Abilities make 'em capable of doing greater Service, would on all Occaſions ſhow leſs of the Worldly Prudence, *and more of the* Chriſtian Courage; *That they would not ſuffer themſelves to be lull'd aſleep by Men who cry out for* Peace, *and intend none; who make a Clamour for* Moderation, *which they never practiſe themſelves; and under other ſpecious pretences, are induſtriouſly contending for a Power, which they never want the Will, to make uſe of to our prejudice.*

But I need not mention theſe things to you who are ſo well appriz'd of 'em; and I ſhould rather take this opportunity of commending to the World the ſound Principles, and all other good qualities which you are poſſeſs'd of: but as thoſe are Truths which all that know you are ſufficiently ſenſible of, ſo I think my ſelf oblig'd, by the honour of a long acquaintance, to ſpare your Modeſty, and avoid the imputation of Flattery. And therefore I ſhall only beg of you to accept of this Offering, to pardon all defects in it, and to take it for an hearty, tho' unworthy, Acknowledgment of the many Favours receiv'd by,

SIR,

Your moſt obedient humble Servant,

J. SAVAGE.

Deuteronom. IV. 6.

—*Surely this great Nation is a wiſe and underſtanding people.*

WISDOM, As it is one of the firſt and moſt viſible Attributes in the Godhead, ſo is it in Man the brighteſt Tranſcript of the Divine Original. By Wiſdom did the Almighty Create, and ſtill Governs the World, and by faint Copies or Emanations from that perfection does Man perform all his Actions, that can be called either good or great. Its innate Beauties are ſo apparent and confeſs'd, that tho' none but a *Solomon* is Recorded to have preferr'd the choice of it to all other more glittering Ornaments of Life, yet every Man is poſſeſs'd with ſo good an Opinion of its worth and excellency, its uſe and neceſſity, that, as to be call'd a Fool is the firſt affront, which the Men of honour will reſent, ſo is it the laſt character, which the verieſt Idiot upon Earth will ſubmit to; and all Men in general are more inclin'd to bear any other imputation, than that of wanting Wiſdom. Tax a Man with the breach of any Vertue, and he will patiently endure it, will confeſs the fault, or even applaud himſelf in it. But if you arraign his Wiſdom, you wound him in the moſt ſenſible part, you deſtroy that Idol to which *Adam* ſacrific'd his

2 Chron. 1. 10.

Innocence, and in which all his Poſterity ſeek a refuge for their ſeveral actions; how far ſoever remov'd they may be from the true Spirit of it. For even the Extortioners preferring profit to honeſty, and the Epicure's eaſe and luxury are ſanctify'd with the holy Name of Wiſdom. The Coward that flies from his own ſhadow, and the Bold-adventurer that faces all dangers, aſcribe their contrary paſſions to the ſame Underſtanding. They
Prov. 14 9. that make a *mock at ſin*, and *ſit in the chair of ſcor-*
Pſal. 1. 1. *ners*, applaud the flights of their own Wit. He
Luk. 12, 18. that *enlarg'd his barns* for a long ſcene of life, which ended the night after, little thought of being made ſuch a Fool for his pains; and even the
Pſal. 53. 1. *Fool that ſaid in his heart, There was no God*, was,
Iſa. 5. 21. no doubt of it, *wiſe in his own conceit, and prudent in his own eyes.*

Wiſdom therefore having ſo prevailing a Character with Men, as to be made the Object of all their ſeveral Claims, and in point of reputation the moſt univerſally affected; it ſeems very properly apply'd by *Moſes* to a ſelf-wiſe obſtinate People, as the only powerful Motive to Obedience. For tho' all their Senſes had been witneſſes of the Power of the Almighty in their merciful and miraculous deliverance out of *Egypt*, yet upon every croſs Accident they could forget him. Tho' they had frequently felt his Anger for their Murmurings, yet they balk'd no opportunity of repeating 'em. Since therefore all that might move their hopes and fears, had hitherto been apply'd ineffectually; *Moſes* tries how far the Spirit of Ambition and Emulation in that darling point of reputed Wiſdom would

would carry 'em, and accordingly tells 'em, *Behold I have taught you Statutes and Judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me; Keep therefore and do them, For this is your Wiſdom and Underſtanding in the ſight of the Nations, which ſhall hear all theſe Statutes, and ſay, Surely this great Nation is a wiſe and underſtanding people.*

From which words we may readily draw this plain Propoſition; That the keeping the Commands and Statutes of God is the Wiſdom and Underſtanding of a Nation; and accordingly laying it down for a definition of Wiſdom, that it is a Faculty,

1*ſt*. Of fixing a right and proper End of acting,

2*dly*. Of chuſing right Means that lead to that End, And,

3*dly*. Of applying diligently the Means to the End, I ſhall conſider theſe three Particulars.

I. That the Exerciſe of Religion is the principal End of every Government, and conſequently an act of the trueſt Wiſdom.

II. That a ſettled Form of Religion is, as the Means, moſt conducive to that End, and therefore an improvement of the Wiſdom.

III. That a due proviſion for the ſecurity and advancement of ſuch a ſettlement, is as the Application of the Means to the End, and conſequently the completion of the Wiſdom.

I. That the Exerciſe of Religion is the principal End of every Government, and conſequently an act of the trueſt Wiſdom. Now that is properly ſaid to be the chief End of any thing, which raiſes its Nature to the utmoſt perfection of which it is capable; and therefore ſince the perfection of every Community conſiſts in having the Members of it ſerviceable to one another, whatever beſt promotes that mutual ſervice, muſt neceſſarily be the chief End which is to be aim'd at, and that End is Religion. For,

Firſt, It is of no ſmall advantage to the mutual correſpondence of the Members of a Community or Government, that Religion is agreeable both to the Natural Tendency of every particular Man's mind, and the General Conſent of all Nations interweaving it in their ſeveral Conſtitutions. Becauſe as on the one hand, Whatever notion is ſo univerſal, cannot be deſtroy'd without the greateſt Violence to humane Nature; ſo on the other hand, it is an Obvious Fix'd point, in which all the Members may the moſt eaſily be ſuppos'd to Centre, and will in courſe, if duely cultivated, be *non modo vinculum Dei & Hominis*, as *Tully* calls Religion, *ſed & vinculum Hominum inter ſe*; Not only a Bond of Union between God and Man, but alſo between one Man and another.

Secondly, The many happy Conſequences and natural good Effects of Religion are ſo ſerviceable to a State, as upon the moſt cogent Arguments to recommend the exerciſe of it to every Wiſe Government, as its principal End: With reſpect to theſe advantages is it that *Ariſtotle* begins his Politicks with

πρῶτον

πρῶτον ἡ περὶ θεῶν ἐπιμέλεια, *Let the firſt care be about Religion;* and to paſs over the judgement of other Authors to the ſame purpoſe, *Pliny*, as if he were dictating to the ſeveral great Aſſemblies of our Nation, and this preſent one in particular, where in a ſolemn act of Devotion is perform'd prior to all other buſineſs, tells his Emperour, *Bene ac ſapienter Majores noſtri inſtituerunt, ut rerum agendarum, ita dicendi initium a precationibus capere, quod nihil ritè nihilque providenter homines ſine Deorum immortalium ope, conſilio, honore auſpicarentur.* It was well and wiſely ordain'd of our Anceſtors, that as well great Pleadings as noble Actions ſhould begin with Devotion, becauſe without the aid and influence of Heaven nothing can be prudently undertaken or ever rightly ſucceed. For certainly as it is evident from reaſon, that the Power of the Almighty extends to the rewarding or puniſhing, the advancing or deſtroying every Nation, as their actions pleaſe or diſpleaſe him; ſo will ordinary reading, and even common experience aſſure us, that God does actually interpoſe in all Governments. The many Revolutions and unexpected Turns of State are ſo many viſible inſtances of his ſuperintendency: and whether we conſider that One Example which runs through the whole thread of Scripture, we ſhall find that the Variety of Succeſſes, which the *Jews* met with, was anſwerable to their Piety or their Profaneneſs, and that their utter overthrow attended the meaſure of their Irreligion being compleated. Or if we deſcend from Sacred to Profane Hiſtory, as in particular that of the *Roman* State, it will appear very evident, That tho' the

Polit. l. 1.

Panegyr. ad Trajan.

Religion of Old *Rome* was loaded with Superſtition and Idolatry, yet as if God had not only, as
Act. 17. 30. St. *Paul* ſays, *wink'd at their ignorance*, but even accepted of their Piety and Devotion under their miſtaken Objects of it, the want of ſucceſs in any difficult circumſtance was, during the riſe of the Empire, conſtantly imputed to a neglect of ſome part of their Worſhip; and that ſo thoroughly believ'd, that we find the braveſt Generals appearing moſt pious, and offering moſt Vows to Heaven in hopes of Victory. The *Dictators* and *Conſuls* ever began their offices with atoneing Sacrifices, and were in the greateſt exigencies not only detain'd at *Rome* till they had finiſh'd the *Divine Affair*, but were even recall'd from their Armies to perfect any omiſſion in it. In ſhort, 'tis a common obſervation, that, whilſt a ſenſe of Religion was preſerv'd, the Empire flouriſh'd, and as the One decay'd, the Other fell: God having withdrawn his Protection, as they leſſen'd their Piety, and at length aveng'd himſelf of 'em, as he will of every Nation *that worketh not Righteouſneſs*.

But farther, Religion is not only the trueſt ſupport, and therefore ought to be the chief end of every Government, with reſpect to the unforeſeen and unaccountable Bleſſings of Providence which attend it; but alſo with reſpect to its own Natural good effects, in the influence which it has upon the ſeveral Members of a Society. In ſo much that
Prov. 21. 30. 8. 15. as there is *no underſtanding, nor counſel, nor wiſdom againſt the Lord*, neither can *Kings reign nor Princes decree juſtice* without him, much leſs in defiance of

of him; So neither can any Government ſtand ſo firm as when built upon Religious Principles: and not to trouble you with any inſtances of the Heathen Morality, which had its ſeveral tendencies to the ſtrength'ning the Sinews of Government, but is refin'd and improv'd by Chriſtianity, whatever might be ſaid upon that point will be imply'd in this Propoſition, that, No Government can ſtand ſo firm as when built upon Chriſtian Principles. For,

Firſt, If we conſider the Governing part of a Nation: As nothing can temper the Greatneſs and Power of a Prince more than a juſt ſenſe of Religion; ſo neither can any thing more recommend him to the love and reverence of his People. It firſt furniſhes him with Perſonal Vertues, whoſe innate Beauties even the Wicked muſt in ſome meaſure admire; and then makes his Commands go down with leſs reluctance, upon aſſurance that a Religious Prince will never prove a hard Task-maſter. For Chriſtianity ſets ſuch bounds to Tyranny and Oppreſſion, as muſt (if any thing can) remove all Grievances: and if there be any inſtances found, where ſome Chriſtan Princes have been as boundleſs in their Tyranny, as in their Ambition, thoſe faults are not imputable to Chriſtianity it ſelf, but to the Prince's want of it. For as it is evident, that, where Chriſtianity prevails, the Condition of Slaves is by no means ſo terrible as what it was, and is, under Heatheniſm; So neither can any the moſt Arbitrary Government be better qualify'd and moderated than by the Goſpel-commands. They beſt teach a Prince *not to exerciſe authority like the Gentiles*; Luk. 22. 25.

Rom.13.3. *tiles; To be a terrour, not to good works, but to the*
Mic. 6. 8. *evil; To do juſtice, love mercy* and *walk humbly with* his *God*, in due conſideration, that tho' he be a Lord upon Earth, yet he is accountable to a
Prov. 16. 12. greater Lord in Heaven; and *as it is an abomination to Kings to commit wickedneſs, ſo a throne is eſtabliſh'd by Righteouſneſs.*

Secondly, If we conſider what ſhall render a People moſt tractable and obedient to Governours, we ſhall find that Chriſtianity muſt certainly have the moſt prevailing influence; and in particular it ſeems evident from the Doctrine of *Obedience*, in a late Reign maintain'd to be *paſſive*, how deſervedly neither do I pretend to determine, nor is this Libertine Age prepar'd to receive: But yet thus much I ſhall ſay, that if *Non-reſiſtance* had any ground in Scripture, as has been frequently and learnedly aſſerted, we need not doubt but the ſame Scripture will abundantly furniſh the beſt Arguments to ſuch as are content with a more moderate degree of Obedience. When it bids Men, upon the moſt valuable Conſiderations of Eternity, *To*
Rom.13.1. *be ſubject to the higher powers as ordain'd of God;*
v. 5. *To obey not only out of wrath, but conſcience; To*
1 Pet.2.13. *ſubmit themſelves to every Ordinance of Man for*
2Pet.2.10. *the Lord's ſake; Not to deſpiſe dominion, Nor re-*
Jud. 8. *ſiſt dignities; Nor to ſpeak evil of the Rulers of the*
Act. 23. 5. *people.* For certainly if the ſenſe of Men's doing their duty, and the hopes of future rewards, aſſur'd in the Goſpel, will not on the one hand win Men to Obedience; nor the Terrors of Divine Vengeance, threatned on the other hand, affright them from Rebellion, it is ſcarce conceivable what other

other Arguments ſhall move 'em. For though Magiſtrates are ſaid not *to bear the Sword in vain,* Rom. 13. 4. yet unleſs the People are poſſeſs'd with good Principles, the end of drawing it will be loſt; and nothing ſhall keep Deſperado's from expoſing their bodies to all earthly Vengeance, but the Belief of a Power ſufficient and ready to deſtroy their Souls alſo.

The Penalties affix'd to humane Laws are but vainly talk'd of, as ſufficient Obligations to Obedience: For they will no longer have a check upon ſome Mens minds, than there can be no trick found out to evade the force of 'em; nor any means left of not being diſcover'd in the breach of 'em; nor laſtly, the advantage of defying the Law is not greater than the Penalty: for in this Age it is no new thing to have Pillories made the Stages of Triumph; and it has been no unfrequent inſtance in Hiſtory to have Villains ſtrike at other Men's Heads with the trifling expence of their own Ears.

Neither again will the Neceſſities of Humane Nature and the Miſchiefs of Confuſion prove any other than a fallible and temporary ſupport of Government: for neither is the World on one hand ſo much inclin'd to gratitude, as to have conſtant regard to the Neceſſities even of their Benefactors, when their own turn is ſerv'd; and on the other hand there ſeldom wants a ſett of Men, who are for fiſhing in troubled waters, and always hope to benefit themſelves by Confuſion.

Laſtly, As for the Publick Benefit, and Security's having a ſufficient influence upon all Mens Actions; That is too ſublimate a notion for the Age we live

in, and what Men call a Publick Spirit, is ſo little ſeen, that it is well if ſelf-intereſt does not rule, even the Better ſort of Men, ſo far, as to make 'em change their juſteſt Notions for private Advantage: at leaſt a Publick Spirit is ſo much eſtrang'd from the Multitude, that even Religion it ſelf, when added for the ſupport of the Common Good, cannot prevent its being continually invaded by many of 'em; as my Lords the Judges have conſtant proof, in the trouble they are twice a year put to in their Circuits, for reſtraining and correcting ſuch, as, *Not having the Fear of God before their eyes offend againſt the Publick Peace.* And ſince I am fallen upon the form of our Indictments, which bears ſuch ample Teſtimony to the benefit of Religion in a State, I ſhall mention this farther ſervice which Religion does; that beſides the good diſpoſitions which it works in Men, not only towards the Magiſtrate, but alſo towards one another; As there would be no end of ſtrife, nor any deciſion of difficult Controverſies, without the Confirmation of an Oath; So neither would there be any Solemnity or Confirmation in an Oath, if Religion did not ſtrengthen the Obligation, and the God, by whom Men ſwear, were not believ'd and reverenc'd.

In ſhort, without Religion there would be no peace nor quiet in the World; no order nor Government in a State; no truſt nor confidence among Men; nor any laſting ſecurity of commerce; but *Hobbes's* State of Nature would enter into all Societies; The ſtrongeſt fighter would call himſelf the trueſt Poſſeſſor, and force of Arms, not Juſtice, would determine the merits of every cauſe.

Reli-

Religion therefore as in *General* it is the most Universal notion among Men; the most receiv'd Maxim in Government; and the best Title to the protection of Providence; And Christianity in *Particular* can best disarm the Powerful, and soften the Wills of the perverse; can best remove Oppression, and charm the Witchcraft of Rebellion; can most improve mutual Charity, correct inordinate Appetites, enforce an exact Justice, and preserve the due bounds of *Meum* and *Tuum*; and all this not upon uncertain and unsteady, but upon firm and eternal Principles: So is it most undoubtedly that Institution, which only can raise a Government to the highest pitch which it is capable of, and consequently is the principal End of every Wise Nation. I proceed therefore,

II. To show, that a settled form of Religion is, as the means, most conducive to that end, and therefore an improvement of the Wisdom. For however Religion, naturally speaking, may not consist in Form, and we may allow that a Person supposd separate from all Community may practise it without any Form; yet besides, that, even in that case, the want of a fix'd method may create many inconsistencies, and in time worm out and destroy his Religion; there is a great deal of difference between a Man consider'd singly by himself, and what he is in Society: for in the one case he may be left more to his Liberty, but in the other there is a Necessity that he direct all his Motions to a common stated Centre; or Unity, which is the strength of Government, will be lost, and no

affairs will ever proceed but with the utmoſt Confuſion. So that tho' Forms are not always of the Eſſence of the thing form'd, yet at leaſt they are the means of promoting, and even preſerving it; and accordingly in all Acts of Government, in the Seſſions of all great Councils, there are ſettled Methods of proceeding; and particularly in the practiſe of the Law, there are Forms of Proceſs, Terms, Garb, Rules of Court, and other Formalities; which tho' not the Eſſence of the Law, yet are the Means of the execution of it. The ſame reaſon therefore, which preſcribes a ſettled Form to all other Acts of Society, preſcribes it to Religion alſo. For as in particular, it is ſcarce poſſible to conceive, how a multitude ſhould perform Acts of Publick Worſhip and Joint-communion, without the Terms of it being firſt agreed upon; ſo neither in general can Religion anſwer the great deſigns of it, or even ſubſiſt Nationally without it.

And thus much ſeems to be confeſs'd by all ſorts of Chriſtians amongſt us. For how variouſly ſoever Men diſſent from our Eſtabliſhment, and pretend to wonder why we will inſiſt upon Forms; yet it is not becauſe they think a ſettled Form of Worſhip unreaſonable, but becauſe their own is not uppermoſt, and the onely One. For it is very plain from the practiſe of a Neighbouring Aſſembly, the *Penſylvanian* Brethren, and the Rebellion of Forty one, that the Charity of Diſſenters is not ſo extenſive as not to incline 'em to force all Men to their ſeveral Levels. What Reaſons they go upon, I do not determine; but for our own inſiſting upon one Common Form to a Nation, I ſhall venture to ſay, *Firſt*,

First, That it is to be fear'd, least too great a Latitude of Worship should destroy Religion it self; and the Liberty as now-a-days stretch'd beyond the design of the Toleration, of every Man's serving God in his own way, should end in the not serving him at all. We have heard of Rivers cut into so many Chanels as to have quite lost their streams: and however Scripture is an inexhaustible Fountain; Yet as, when misinterpreted, it has formerly given birth to many Heretical Doctrines; so it has still Enemies enough, who by gathering absurd Consequences from it, endeavour earnestly to destroy its Character and Credit amongst Men.

However again, the Essentials of Christianity may be thought possible to be preserv'd in a vast variety of Opinion; yet certainly 'tis the advantage of the Religion truely Christian, that as it proposes *one Faith, one Baptism, one Hope of our calling, and one Lord*; so it requires one way of consenting to these Truths: they are to be receiv'd in *Unity of Spirit* and *the Bond of Peace*, or they will hardly be receiv'd at all. Witness the many divisions amongst us to the breach of Charity, which is the Foundation and Life of Christianity. Witness also the growth of *Deists* and *Socinians*, not more imputable to Men's own corrupt inclinations, than the Contrariety of Opinions amongst Christians. But,

Eph. 4. 4.

Eph. 4. 3.

Secondly, Supposing Christianity in general were not endanger'd from a boundless Latitude, nor liable to be lost in the Confusion; yet at least, the better part of it, Protestantism, must needs run a mighty hazard from so unlimited a Variety. *Divi-*

de & Impera is the ſtanding Maxim of the *Romaniſts*; and as they continually labour to reconcile us to their falſe Worſhip, ſo they have always promoted Latitude of Opinion amongſt us, as the moſt effectual means towards it. For beſides, that in a Nation, where every one may ſet up for a Teacher, and the Shop-board as oft as the Library ſupplies the Mouth of a Conventicle, it is no hard matter, nor any unknown practice for a *Romaniſt* to perſonate ſuch an Orator, and by ſuiting his Cant to the itching Ears of his Auditors, to carry 'em whether he pleaſes: He has alſo this farther advantage, that he may not only by Hypocriſy inſinuate and adapt himſelf to the guiſe of moſt diſſenting Congregations, but even appear barefac'd in ſome Doctrines: the *Quaker*'s unerring Light gives a handle to the higheſt flights of the *Roman* Infallibility; *Antinomianiſm* is but St. *Peter*'s Indulgence in a more awkward dreſs; the power which *Independents* and other Sectaries uſurp over Princes and Magiſtrates, is a true Tranſcript of the Popiſh Tyranny; and *Occaſional Conformity*, as now-a-days practis'd, is but the mental reſervation of a Jeſuit.

In ſhort, let the fomenters of Latitude and Diſſenſion boaſt as they pleaſe of their averſion to Popery, they moſt undoubtedly forward the cauſe of it; they have divided and ſubdivided the Members of the pureſt Eſtabliſhment into ſo many Sects and Parties, that they have left it ſcarce numbers to ſupport it, nor given it leiſure to oppoſe that common Enemy, who is always watching for advantage; and I wiſh he may not at this time boaſt of as much ſucceſs, as when the Laws of the Land were

were leſs ſevere againſt Popery, and the Diſcipline of our Church was more powerful. But,

Thirdly, A boundleſs Latitude of Worſhip may not only prove deſtructive to Religion in general, and Proteſtantiſm in particular, but, what even Men of the looſeſt Principles ought to be concern'd for, will alſo diſturb the Peace of a Nation. For however our Modern Libertines may aſſert, that the cauſe of Religion ſhould be unregarded, and that the State ought not to be concern'd in the Conteſts, or any other accidents which attend Religion merely: Yet a confident aſſertion will not ſettle the matter, it cannot obſtruct the influence which Religion will have upon the Civil Government, nor prevent the ill conſequences that will attend too great a Latitude of Worſhip. For as Religion has not only the moſt univerſal, but even the moſt powerful ſway over men's Minds; ſo it will be heard where ever it pleaſes to exert its voice; and the very Calves of *Dan* and *Bethel* ſhall be able to divide the Kingdom of *Iſrael* from that of *Judah*.

'Tis the very Nature of Mankind to differ as much in ſome Opinions as in their faces; and as it is the unhappineſs of Religion to give occaſion not only to different, but even contrary Notions; ſo it will affect the Quiet of a State, as theſe ſeveral Notions ſhall poſſeſs weak minds, or be taken up by buſy heads.

'Tis the very life of a Phariſee *to compaſs Sea and Land for a proſelyte*, and every the leaſt groundleſs Opinion, with a pretence of Religion at the bottom of it, will not only ſeek for Advocates, but even draw Multitudes after it. Matth. 23. 15.

It

It might therefore be as well expected, that the change of Languages ſhould not have defeated the building of *Babel*; as that a numberleſs variety of Tenents in Religion ſhould not diſtract a Nation into ſo many different Parties. Certainly it is not ſo eaſily forgot how Enthuſiaſm in former days overthrew this Church and Nation, and harraſs'd the Remains of 'em with contending Factions: Nor is it any uncommon Obſervation, that our Diſſenting Brethren trade among themſelves altogether, and by a Common Purſe maintain the Cauſe of any ſuffering Diſciple of theirs, right or wrong, rather than they will ſuffer any aſperſion to be caſt upon their Principles, or loſe any Opportunity of advancing their ſeparate intereſts.

Theſe then are ſome of the principal Reaſons among the many which recommend to us the Wiſdom of a ſettled Form of Worſhip, *viz.* for the Security of Religion in general, of Proteſtantiſm in particular, and for the Peace of a State: And I need not add, that the noted Inconſtancy of our Nation makes it to be a more neceſſary Doctrine, becauſe that Neceſſity is abundantly ſupply'd in our Wiſe Eſtabliſhment, if we knew but how to value the Bleſſing, and had due regard either to the true Intereſt and Welfare of our Nation, or the Excellency and Dignity of our moſt holy Religion. For,

Firſt, With reſpect to that Politic *Eraſtian* Argument of adapting the Form of Religion to that of the Civil Government: The Epiſcopacy of our Church is ſo neceſſary an Aſſiſtant to Monarchy, that what King *James* the Firſt frequently ſaid, *No Biſhop, No King*, is apparently true; eſpecially

ally if we conſider the Inſults he himſelf ſuffer'd from an uſurping Presbytery, and the greater Calamities which attended his Son, when he was forc'd to lay down his Crown at the ſame Block, where the Mitre had juſt been ſacrific'd before. The Natural Form alſo of our Epiſcopacy is moſt correſpondent to that of the State, in that its ſeveral ſubordinate Offices aſcend gradually to a principle of Unity, and make but one Line from the Throne, which is its Centre: and its Principles have always, I hope, been ſo Honourable and Loyal, as to make it ſacrifice its own Quiet to the Intereſt of the Crown, and to deſpiſe the Invectives of Factious Republicans in the Defence of Monarchy.

In ſhort, whatever Objections, of its being a Popiſh Inſtitution, have been made againſt Epiſcopacy, they were but the Outſides to a Malice directed chiefly againſt Monarchy; it being the known Policy of the *Latitudinarian* Multitude, to pave their way through the parity of Church-membership to a level in the State; for that the One could never yet be effected without the Other: and whatever Attempts therefore ſhall at any time be made againſt the Church, ought to be ſuſpected for ill deſigns againſt the Crown; it being a very natural Concluſion, that they who invade the Rights of God, ſhould have but little regard to thoſe of Princes.

Secondly, As our Eſtabliſh'd Form of Religion beſt anſwers the Form and Neceſſities of the State, ſo what more recommends the Wiſdom of its being Eſtabliſh'd; 'tis of Divine Original, and ſtands upon the ſame foot with Chriſtianity it ſelf. For

that, as Chriſt commiſſion'd his Apoſtles to perpetuate and tranſmit to all poſterity the Government of his Church, conformable to that of his own preſiding over the Apoſtles, as the Apoſtles did over the Seventy Diſciples; ſo, according to the Teſtimony of all Ages, the Subordination of Biſhops, Prieſts and Deacons in the Government of our Church, is correſpondent to that of the Apoſtolical Hierarchy, and deriv'd from it by a conſtant and uninterrupted Succeſſion. Then again, its Doctrines are moſt pure and Orthodox; its Sacraments moſt Chriſtian; its Liturgy moſt primitive and complete; its Modes and Ceremonies moſt decent, orderly and edifying; its Charity moſt extenſive; and in all reſpects (but ſome want of Diſcipline) it is ſo divine and perfect, that I need not ſtick to ſay, that our Nation will be in danger of renouncing Chriſtianity it ſelf, when it gives up ſo wiſe an Inſtitution: For that it is eaſily remember'd how in the laſt Civil Wars, Religion, when torn from our Church, was expos'd to the reſtleſs humours of unreaſonable Men, and was toſs'd about amongſt contending Parties with the utmoſt confuſion, till, like the *Dove* ſent out of *Noah's Ark*, *it could find no place to ſet its foot in*, and was glad, as at the Reſtoration of Monarchy and Epiſcopacy, *to return to the Ark* from whence it flew.

Wherefore, ſince a Nation cannot be accounted Wiſe, nor even ſubſiſt without Religion, nor yet can be Religious without a Form; Since Chriſtianity is the moſt excellent Religion, and Our ſettled Form the pureſt part of Chriſtianity; the Wiſdom and Underſtanding of our Nation is abundantly viſible

viſible in fixing ſo good an *End*, and chuſing ſuch proper *Means* to it. But then as good Thoughts, and great Deſigns, are but a lame piece of Policy, without effectual care taken for the execution of 'em. So according to my

III^d. and laſt Propoſition, A due proviſion for the Security and Advancement of ſuch a ſettled Form, is the only completion of that Wiſdom. With regard to this Notion was it that our pious Reformers eſtabliſh'd it by Law; and for a farther Security, did their Succeſſours appoint Penalties, and ſettle a Teſt. Proviſions ſufficient in any Government, where Laws were made to be kept; but amongſt us where they ſcarce ſeem made for any other end, but to exerciſe men's Wits in finding out Evaſions, or at leaſt are continually liable to 'em, it may juſtly be complain'd that they are not ſufficient. To ſupply that defect therefore, we are told that the Toleration-Act was paſs'd. Now, tho' I pretend not to determine how the relaxing a Penalty can ſecure a Law, or a Licence for Separation can ſtrengthen a Community; Yet thus much I may ſay, that unleſs the Sons of the Toleration keep more within the bounds of it, and take no other liberties than what was intended, of Worſhip only; this ſuppos'd Bleſſing of our Church may prove a Curſe to it; and they, who do not altogether diſlike the Toleration, may heartily pray for ſome farther Securities againſt the miſchievous Conſequences of it. For beſides, that a Deluge of Atheiſm and Profaneneſs, of Faction and Sedition has flown in under the ſhelter of it,

and may in time pervert the Conſtitution of the State, as well as the Church; What ought we not immediately to fear from ſo ſcandalous a practiſe, as now prevails amongſt us? wherein Men that accuſe us of Superſtition, can yet comply with the moſt hated Inſtance of it, can *ſtrain at Gnats, and ſwallow a Camel*, and dread no Oath, no Altar, no Sacrament in proſecution of worldly advantages. Certainly they that can diſſemble with Man in the moſt perfect Bond of Communion, and with God in the moſt ſolemn Act of Worſhip, deſerve but little credit in other concerns; and they that juſtify ſuch a practiſe, may perhaps do it with a very dangerous Example. For where will it end, when the connivance of the State ſhall declare it to be no ſin to ſwear at any Altar? what ſhall hinder Papiſts themſelves from taking part in the Privilege, conſidering that however a general Practiſe of it was formerly forbidden, yet particular Diſpenſations from *Rome* are no Novelties? How again ſhall Aſſociations to the Government be ſecure, or of any force, if they are to be ſubſcrib'd only for Form's ſake? And laſtly, how ſhall deciſions in our Courts of Law be aſcertain'd, if they that take the Oath, are not oblig'd to the Terms and Sence of the Court, in which they take it, but may kiſs the book, as they kneel at the Sacrament, by an *Occaſional Conformity*; that is, may interpret the Oath after they have taken it, as it ſhall ſuit beſt with their own humour and conveniency? I make no queſtion but that even ſome Heathens would have been aſham'd of ſuch a practiſe; and, in particular, I remember a noble Sentence of the

Roman

Roman Hiſtorian, in commendation of the *Roman* Fidelity, and, as it were, a prophetic Invective on our Double-dealers, *Nondum ea, quæ nunc tenet ſæculum, negligentia Deorum venerat, nec interpretando ſibi quiſque jusjurandum leges aptas faciebat, ſed ſuos potius mores ad ea accommodabat*; They ſhow'd none of that contempt of God which now reigns; nor did they ſtretch the Laws to which they had ſwore, to what they had a mind to keep of 'em; but rather conſider'd, that their Oath admitted of no Equivocation, and therefore work'd themſelves up to an entire Obedience to what the Impoſer of the Oath intended. 'Tis no great preſumption therefore to expect ill conſequences from ſuch a practiſe, eſpecially if we conſider, that, as theſe *Occaſional Conformiſts* can ſacrifice the ſqueamiſhneſs of Conſcience to the hopes of preferment; ſo they have ſtrain'd their former Modeſty from deſiring freedom of Worſhip only, to a bold claim of Governing alſo. For whether elſe tend their indefatigable Induſtry, their ſtrains of Wit and Malice, their Notions of Comprehenſion, Univerſality of Proteſtants, Moderation, and their diſtinctions of high and low Church, and the ſtrength of Party which they have made, but to ſet themſelves upon a level with our Eſtabliſhment? The end of which is to be what *Cato* ſaid of the *Romans*, *Simul ac pares eſſe cœperint, ſuperiores erunt*; When thoſe reſtleſs people ſhall have got an equal ſhare of Government, they will ſoon be Maſters, and never leave, till as formerly, they ſhall have wholly ſupplanted us.

Liv. lib. 3. c. 20.

Liv. lib. 3. c. 3.

Againſt theſe fears is it that we think the Church wants a farther Security; and indeed this Security, Thanks to our Noble Patriots, has been twice already attempted, and may not, we hope, always miſcarry. For, God forbid, that Chriſtianity ſhould be reckon'd a State-Engine altogether, and our Church a Temporary Inſtitution only; or that the Seaſon of War and Calamity, ſhould not more earneſtly oblige the Diſciples of the Croſs to correct abuſes in the Service of God, and to drive all profane and hypocritical Worſhippers from their Altars. The Policy of the *Roman* Government, which our Age ſeems to be fonder of than what is conſiſtent with Monarchy, employ'd it ſelf moſt diligently in all dangerous Times for rooting out ſuch Corruptions; and in particular, when *Hannibal* was at the Gates, and *Rome* in the greateſt danger, and the Multitude of new-fangled Worſhippers had made all amendments difficult; that Order, *Ne qui niſi Romani Dii, neu quo alio quam patrio more colerentur*, that none but the Gods of *Rome* ſhould be Worſhip'd, nor in any other manner than what was eſtabliſh'd at *Rome*, was put in practiſe with the utmoſt Vigour, and the ſucceſs of the War was accordingly anſwerable to their Piety. I deſign not, upon mentioning this inſtance, to run a Parallel between the Religions, any more than the danger of them and us, for in both caſes we have the Advantage; our Religion is more divine, and worthy of ſupport, and our Dangers from abroad are apparently leſs. Nor yet would I apply their Reſolve of allowing but one way of Worſhip ſo cloſely, as to ſeem to offer any Violence to the Toleration,

Liv. lib. 25.

ration, ſince the Government has been pleas'd to indulge it to Tender Conſciences, not with any deſign to endanger the Safety of our Eſtabliſhment. The new Security therefore, that has been attempted, and will ſtill be deſired, is of a different nature; 'tis not to force all Men to our ſettled Form, but to prevent that Form's being deſtroy'd; 'tis to preſerve our Religion from profane Hypocriſy, and in that purity which the Neceſſities of War more eſpecially require God to be ſerv'd in; 'tis by fencing the Church from all Encroachments to ſecure the State alſo; and in a high degree to complete the *Wiſdom and Underſtanding* of our *Nation*, whenever our Superiours ſhall be pleas'd to think ſo.

In the mean time, as we bewail the want of that Security, ſo we may take a view of other inſtances of Folly, which ride Triumphant amongſt us, and with more audacious Inſults ſhake our Eſtabliſhment: Not only the Church and its Altars are profan'd, but its Principles are derided, the Fathers and Sons of it are inſulted, and even Religion it ſelf is exploded; the Myſteries of Chriſtianity are ridicul'd, and the Truth of Holy Scripture diſputed; the Hopes of futurity are made to depend upon a Man's never dying; the Immortality of the Soul is imputed to the invention of Heathen Philoſophy, and by a later writer to the Surmiſes of the Multitude only. Thus whatever ſtanding Principles in Chriſtianity have been formerly receiv'd with Faith, are by our preſent Libertines rejected with Reproach, and the bittereſt Invectives againſt 'em are made the daily burden of the Preſs.

When

When Heaven it ſelf therefore is ſo impudently attack'd, and the Bleſſed Trinity ſo rudely inſulted, 'tis no wonder if a Worm be trod upon, and Slander and Detraction attend the beſt of Men, and force 'em thro' ill report *to carry the Croſs*, upon which their great Redeemer himſelf is in our Age continually *Crucify'd afreſh*. From ſuch Principles what leſs can follow, than that they who maintain Order and Decency in the Church, ſhould be branded with the hated Name of *Papiſts*; they that aſſert the Prerogative of Monarchy and Epiſcopacy, ſhould be repreſented as *Jacobites*; and all that ſay a word in behalf of the Church Eſtabliſh'd, and would ſecure its fences, ſhould be miſcall'd High-flyers, Perſecutors of Tender Conſciences, Immoderate Men, and, Sons of the Inquiſition; that the Aſhes of thoſe, who have died in our defence, ſhould be flung up with contempt, our preſent Patriots be continually vilify'd, and even the beſt of Queens ſcarce eſcape their Invectives.

Are not theſe inſtances of a deprav'd Wiſdom? and have we not ſufficient cauſe to wiſh for timely proviſion againſt ſo unreaſonable and boundleſs a Liberty? A Liberty which the Factious and Irreligious thus overſtrain, and yet continually remind the Multitude of aſſerting, as tho' they wanted it. A Liberty like that which *Appius Claudius* complain'd of, *Ea Romæ libertas eſt, non Senatum, non Magiſtratus, non Leges, non Mores Majorum, non Inſtituta Patrum, non Diſciplinam militiæ vereri.* We live in an Age where Liberty is uſurp'd without regard to Reaſon or Religion; a Liberty to be Atheiſts or Deiſts; to communicate at all Altars, and

Liv. l. 5. c. 6.

and yet diſown the Communion; to deſpiſe Dominion, and ſpeak evil of Dignities; to revile Governours, and oppoſe Magiſtrates; to ſet up Men's own looſe Principles againſt the wiſe reſtrictions of their Anceſtours; to bring all Orders and Diſtinctions of Quality to the Level of the Multitude; to diſturb the Conſtitution both of Church and State; and, in a word, to be neither Engliſh-men nor Chriſtians. This is the Liberty which our Age affects, and we have all the reaſon imaginable from its daily Advances to fear, that it may improve: Eſpecially if we conſider the credit and employ which *French* Academies and Foreign Educators have amongſt us; Thoſe Men that have always Travelling Religions, and for the moſt part ſuſpected ones, have the opportunity of inſtilling the looſeſt of their Principles into the beſt of our Youth; and when they have done with 'em, the Societies and Clubs of looſe Livers amongſt our ſelves ſeize the Prey, fix 'em in their moſt Libertine Notions, and by all Arts and Means, like the *Phariſees* of old, make 'em *twofold more the Children of Hell than themſelves.* Math. 23. 15. Thus is the preſent Age diſcipl'd, and Poſterity provided for; and unleſs as much induſtry be apply'd, by the Sons of the Church, as we cannot but ſee is indefatigably us'd by the contrary Faction, I wiſh the Miſchiefs that may enſue from ſuch a Neglect may not arraign the *Wiſdom and Underſtanding of our Nation.*

To you, My Lords the Judges, do we therefore apply our ſelves; You are, we doubt not, ſo convinc'd in your Judgments of the Merits of our Church, as not only for the ſake of Monarchy, but

alſo for its own ſake to wiſh it freed even from all Fears of Encroachments; and withal, you cannot but meet with ſuch frequent inſtances of an over-ſtrain'd Liberty, as to know our Apprehenſions are not altogether unreaſonable. From Your Examples, which we are ſure will be ever good and great, muſt Our Magiſtrates learn their Duty; and by your Advice and Encouragement will they be ſooneſt taught,

2. Tim. 1. 13. Jud. 3. To *hold faſt the Form of ſound words, and contend earneſtly for the Faith* of Our Church, with a Zeal equal to that of their Adverſaries; conſidering always, that tho' a bad Cauſe needs moſt aſſiſtance, yet a good one beſt deſerves it: To think it a moſt imperfect Wiſdom to know the *true End* and *Means*, unleſs they apply the One to the Other, to be Members of Our Eſtabliſhment, unleſs they alſo Protect and Advance it; To be diligent in Execution of thoſe Laws, which may preſerve the State, as well as Church, in its ſettled Form; neither over-ſtraining the Law through Partiality, nor leſſening the Force of it by popular Connivance or miſ-ſtated Moderation; and conſidering always, that Factions in the State and Schiſms in the Church, like breaches in high-ways, ariſe from the neglect of wholſom Ordinances, by which they might eaſily have been ſtopp'd in the beginning, but cannot afterwards be cur'd without a pretended breach of Liberty.

To conclude: *When* all our Magiſtrates and true Sons of the Church ſhall uſe that Courage and Induſtry, which the Malice of their Adverſaries requires; *When* the multitude ſhall no longer be taught to deſpiſe Lawful Ordinances, nor Liberty of Conſcience tend to Atheiſm and Profaneneſs;

When

When the Toleration ſhall keep within its due Bounds, and Hypocriſy ſhall be forc'd to pluck off its Mask, and be no more countenanc'd; *When* the exorbitant Liberty of the Preſs ſhall be reſtrain'd, and the Spirit of Detraction and Sedition be made to ceaſe; *When* a true publick Spirit ſhall ſupplant Self-intereſt, and the real common Good become every one's Aim; *When* the Laws ſhall be obſerv'd without Evaſions, and Monarchy and Epiſcopacy ſhine in their lawful and ancient Glory; *When* Religion ſhall be duely encourag'd, and our Univerſities be reſpected as the pureſt Fountains of Learning; *When* our Eſtabliſh'd Church ſhall be made the Centre of Unity to all our People, or at leaſt far remov'd from that Level to which the Sectaries would bring it; *When* Men's communion with it ſhall be conſtant and unfeigned, and the affection of our People towards it ſhall follow the unexampled Bounty of our Queen; *Then ſhall* our *Earth bring forth its increaſe, and God, even our own God, ſhall* continue to *give us his Bleſſing*; *God ſhall bleſs us, and all the Ends of* our *Land ſhall fear him*; Then ſhall our Reputation ſend forth a *ſweet-ſmelling Savour* among the Nations round about; and with ſome aſſurance ſhall it be ſaid, *Surely this Nation is a wiſe and underſtanding People.*

THE END.

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